



Research Division  
Note #58  
October, 1996

## Artist Employment in America - 1995

### The Artist Labor Force

Data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicates that artist employment increased in 1995, but the unemployment rate remained high, at 5.3%. Looking at the artist labor force as a whole (i.e., all eleven artist employment categories) there was no change in the unemployment rate from 1994 to 1995, however, there was a sharp increase in the number of employed artists. The total number of artists in the labor force for 1995 was 1,788,000 which represents an increase of 75,000 from 1994. Furthermore, the number of employed artists rose from 1,622,000 in 1994 to 1,693,000 in 1995 - an increase of 71,000. This surge brought artist employment levels up to an all time high.

### Artist Occupations Compared to Professional Specialty Occupations and the Total Labor Force

The Artist Labor Force as defined in this note includes the eleven occupational categories listed in Table 1, beginning with *Actors and Directors*. The Total Civilian Labor Force category represents all employed and unemployed persons over the age of 16. The category of Professional Specialty Occupations is a broad group of occupations which includes the eleven artist occupations listed in Table 1. The category is formed on the basis of the amount of education and training needed to pursue these careers professionally. The BLS data indicate the following relationships:

- The 4.4% rate of growth in the area of All Artist Occupations in 1995 exceeded that for both Professional Specialty Occupations and the Total Civilian Labor Force. With regards to overall size, the Total Civilian Labor Force grew by 1,273,000 persons in 1995. Roughly half of this growth was within the Professional Specialty Occupation area, which grew by 603,000 persons in 1995. It is worth noting that the growth in the Total Civilian

Labor Force in 1995 was less than one half what it was from 1993 to 1994.

- Looking at the unemployment rates for 1995, those for Professional Specialty Occupations and All Artist Occupations did not change from their 1994 levels. The unemployment rate for the Total Civilian Labor Force dropped by 0.5% in 1995. The significance of this is that the unemployment rate for the Total Civilian Labor Force is lower than the unemployment rate for All Artist Occupations. This has not been the case in recent years (since 1990).

Chart 1 provides a graphic representation of trends in unemployment rates for the three main occupational categories from 1990 to 1995.

### Trends in the Artist Labor Force Since 1992

The category of All Artist Occupations has changed dramatically since 1992. Looking at Table 1, there was a substantial drop (27,000) in the number of persons who considered themselves to be artists from 1992 to 1993. This was followed by a slight increase of 5,000 in 1994. The addition of 75,000 persons to the Artist Labor Force in 1995 has brought the total number up to levels exceeding those of 1992. In spite of these large shifts in total numbers, the unemployment rate for All Artist Occupations fluctuated very little over this period, and has actually decreased by 0.1% since 1992.

### The Individual Artist Occupations

Data concerning the eleven specific artist occupations from 1992 to 1995 is presented in Table 1 of this Research Division note. Table 1 provides information on the size of each occupational group, the number that are either employed or unemployed, and the rate of unemployment for that particular occupation.

It should be remembered that the unemployment rates listed in the table are obtained directly from the Bureau of Labor Statistics using unrounded data, and do not precisely reflect the rounded numbers listed for the number of employed and unemployed in each specific category.

The following highlights some of the changes taking place in the individual artist occupations:

- The biggest decrease in the rate of unemployment was seen in the field of **architects**. This group's rate dropped from 4.4% in 1994 to 2.1% in 1995. Other occupational groups which had a decrease in their

unemployment rate for 1995 were: **actors and directors** (-0.9%), **musicians/composers** (-1.7%), **painters/sculptors/craft artists/artist printmakers** (-0.7%), and **other artists** (-1.1%)

- The largest unemployment rate increase (+2.2%) was in the area of **photographers**. In addition, the total number of photographers fell in 1995. Other artist occupations which showed an increase in their unemployment rate for 1995 include; **announcers** (+0.4%), **authors** (+0.9%), **dancers** (+2.0%), **designers** (+0.4%), and **post-secondary teachers of art/drama/music** (+1.0%).

- In terms of occupational growth, the largest overall increase was in the category of **actors and directors** which grew by 31,000 in 1995, an increase of 31%.

- The artist occupations which decreased in overall size in 1995 include; **musicians/composers** (-6,000), **photographers** (-9,000), and **post-secondary teachers of art/drama/music** (-2,000)

#### About the Data

These national employment statistics are obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey, which reports employment information on over 325 occupations, including eleven arts occupations. A respondent (16 years or older) is considered employed if during the survey week he/she did any paid work in his/her business, profession or farm. To be considered as working in one of these artist occupations in the BLS' survey, one must be working during the survey week and have described that job/work as one of the eleven artist occupations. It is important to note that those holding more than one job are counted in the job in which they worked the most hours during the survey week.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics counts a person as unemployed if they did not have a job during the survey week, were available for work, and had made specific efforts to find a job during the previous four weeks. In order to be counted as unemployed in a particular occupation, an unemployed person's last full-time job must have been in that occupation. Therefore, to be counted as unemployed in one of the artist occupations, one must not have had a job in the survey week, been available for work, have made specific efforts to find work during the four weeks prior to the survey, and last worked in an artist occupation.

Please consult the table and chart for further specific information about the nature of the data being utilized in this Research Division Note.

## Caveats

This Research Division Note is the fourteenth in an annual series utilizing the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) adapted by the Current Population Survey in 1983. Changes in the occupational classification system improved the consistency in measuring employment in the artist occupation groups. Caution should be used when comparing these data to pre-1983 data.

## Research Division Reports and Notes of Related Interest

### Reports

- #1 Employment and Unemployment for Artists: 1970-1975
- #16 Artist Employment and Unemployment: 1971-1980
- #29 Trends in Artist Occupations: 1970-1990

### Notes

- #2 Artist Employment in 1982
- #7 Artist Employment in 1983
- #11 Artist Employment in 1984
- #15 Artist Employment in 1985
- #22 Artist Employment in 1986
- #29 Artist Employment in 1987
- #31 Artist Employment in 1988
- #33 Artist Employment in 1989
- #35 Artist Employment in 1990
- #37 Artist Employment in 1991
- #39 Artist Employment in 1992
- #54 Artist Employment in 1993
- #57 Artist Employment in 1994

Sourcebook of Arts Statistics: 1989, Research Division, April 1990

1992 Addendum to Sourcebook of Arts Statistics, Research Division, April 1992

**Table 1. The Artist Labor Force: Trends in Employment & Unemployment, 1992-1995**  
(all numbers in thousands)

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>Change From '94-'95</u>	<u>Change From '92-'95</u>
<b>Total All Civilian Workers</b>	<b>131,726</b>	<b>130,462</b>	<b>127,087</b>	<b>126,006</b>	<b>+1,273</b>	<b>+6,720</b>
Employed	124,900	123,060	119,306	117,583	+1,840	+7,317
Unemployed	6,825	7,392	7,781	8,422	-567	-1,597
Unemployment Rate	5.2%	5.7%	6.1%	6.7%	-0.5%	-1.5%
<b>Professional Specialty Occupations</b>	<b>18,692</b>	<b>17,989</b>	<b>17,360</b>	<b>16,825</b>	<b>+603</b>	<b>+1,767</b>
Employed	18,132	17,536	16,904	16,393	+596	+1,739
Unemployed	460	453	456	432	+7	+28
Unemployment Rate	2.5%	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%	0.0%	-0.1%
<b>All Artists</b>	<b>1,788</b>	<b>1,713</b>	<b>1,708</b>	<b>1,738</b>	<b>+76</b>	<b>+63</b>
Employed	1,693	1,622	1,621	1,642	+71	+51
Unemployed	95	91	87	93	+4	+2
Unemployment Rate	5.3%	5.3%	5.1%	5.4%	0.0%	-0.1%
<b>Actors and Directors</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>+31</b>	<b>+19</b>
Employed	114	86	96	96	+28	+18
Unemployed	16	13	12	15	+3	+1
Unemployment Rate	12.1%	13.0%	11.2%	13.5%	-0.9%	-1.4%
<b>Announcers</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>+4</b>	<b>-6</b>
Employed	50	46	46	53	+4	-3
Unemployed	3	3	5	5	0	-2
Unemployment Rate	5.7%	5.3%	10.3%	8.0%	+0.4%	-2.3%
<b>Architects</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>+19</b>	<b>+20</b>
Employed	163	141	123	138	+22	+25
Unemployed	3	6	5	8	-3	-5
Unemployment Rate	2.1%	4.4%	3.9%	5.6%	-2.3%	-1.2%
<b>Authors</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>+8</b>	<b>-8</b>
Employed	118	112	139	125	+6	-7
Unemployed	5	3	4	6	+2	-1
Unemployment Rate	3.9%	3.0%	2.7%	4.9%	+0.9%	-1.0%
<b>Dancers</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>+11</b>
Employed	30	28	20	20	+2	+10
Unemployed	3	2	3	2	+1	+1
Unemployment Rate	7.9%	5.9%	11.5%	7.3%	+2.0%	+0.6%
<b>Designers</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>+10</b>	<b>+16</b>
Employed	556	548	541	542	+8	+14
Unemployed	30	28	22	28	+2	+2
Unemployment Rate	5.2%	4.8%	3.9%	4.9%	+0.4%	+0.3%

Table 1. continued

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>Change From '94-'95</u>	<u>Change From '92-'95</u>
<b>Musicians/Composers</b>	172	178	180	197	-6	-25
Employed	161	164	174	188	-3	-27
Unemployed	11	14	6	9	-3	+2
Unemployment Rate	6.3%	8.0%	3.3%	4.8%	-1.7%	+1.5%
<b>Painters, Sculptors, Craft Artists &amp; Artist Printmakers</b>	241	234	232	232	+7	+9
Employed	233	225	222	222	+8	+11
Unemployed	8	9	10	10	-1	-2
Unemployment Rate	3.2%	3.9%	4.2%	4.3%	-0.7%	-1.1%
<b>Photographers</b>	144	153	146	135	-9	+9
Employed	136	148	135	129	-12	+7
Unemployed	8	5	11	6	+3	+2
Unemployment Rate	5.5%	3.3%	7.5%	4.1%	+2.2%	+1.4%
<b>Teachers of Art/Drama/Music (post secondary education)</b>	31	33	36	34	-2	-3
Employed	30	33	35	34	-3	-4
Unemployed	1	*	1	*	*	*
Unemployment Rate	1.7%	0.7%	4.0%	1.4%	+1.0%	+0.3%
<b>Other Artists, N.E.C.**</b>	109	99	98	99	+10	+10
Employed	102	91	90	95	+11	+7
Unemployed	7	8	8	4	-1	+3
Unemployment Rate	6.8%	7.9%	8.5%	4.3%	-1.1%	+2.5%

\*Less than 1,000

\*\*Not Elsewhere Classified

Note: These labor force statistics are based on a sample survey and, consequently, are subject to sampling errors. Relatively small changes in employment in the smaller artist occupations are often not statistically significant. For a more detailed discussion, see Research Division Report #16, Artists Employment and Unemployment: 1971-1980, Appendix B, "Reliability of Current Population Survey (CPS) Statistics." All unemployment rates shown in the Table, except 'All Artists,' were calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics using unrounded data.

Source: Current Population Survey 1992-1995  
 U.S. Department of Labor,  
 Bureau of Labor Statistics

Research Division  
 National Endowment for the Arts  
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**Chart 1. Rates of Unemployment for Total Civilian Labor Force, Professional Specialty Occupations, and All Artist Occupations from 1990-1995**

